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When I awoke on November 8, 2007, my life was fairly normal. I went to work, but came home early due to problems with high blood pressure. Upon arriving home, I tried to take a nap, but felt restless. As I tried to rest, the phone rang and then there was a knock at the door. I ignored both as I wasn't feeling well. A short time later, my husband, Jim, was knocking at the door. I couldn't understand why he was home so early; and why didn't he use his key to unlock the door? Why was he asking me to let him in? When I opened the door, Jim was standing there with two men in suits behind him. I saw the men, but my brain didn't register any kind of alarm or curiosity. It didn't have time, because Jim said he had to tell me something, but didn't know how. That was when my life was changed forever. "It's our Daniel. He's been stabbed to death." I had just been told that my only son was gone; that I would never see him, again, for as long as I lived; that he had suffered a horrible death. I am grateful for the blessings of a loving Heavenly Father, because if He had not surrounded me with peace and calm at that moment and through the many days, months, and years to come, I would not have survived that terrible news. Then to hear what was done to his body after his death. How could anyone be so cruel and depraved? I knew there was evil in the world, but I had never come face-to-face with it in such a manner.

It was only a day or so later that I learned the identity of my son's killers. Teenagers? They lured my son under false pretense to a garage, where one of the teens slit Dan's throat, then proceeded to stab him multiple times while he layed on the ground fighting for his life. Dan was unable to breathe due to the blood that filled his throat. He was weakened by the quick blood loss, cold, in shock, filled with anxiety, knowing he was about to die. His 17-year old killer, Jean Pierre Orlewicz siad, "Just go with it, man." My husband, James Sorensen, already told you about the carnage that Orlewicz inflicted upon Dan's body post mortem. It shocked the entire Detroit area. A crime has to be pretty awful to shock people in the Detroit area.

So what is it like to be the mother of a murdered child? It's the greatest heartbreak that a mother can suffer - to lose a child. To make things even worse, Dan was on the Sexual Offender Registry, because he and a former girlfriend, who was not yet 16 when Dan was 17 had engaged in some touching. The girl's stepfather was abusive. Dan went to Illinois to face the man and bring the girl and her mother back to Michigan where they would be safe. The man didn't like that and forced the mother to file a PPO against Dan under threat of harm. The media latched on to the SOR link without knowing the facts behind it which resulted in constant comments on blogs and the like that Dan was a "pervert", that he deserved to die; that society was better off with him dead. They even referred to Dan's killer as a "hero." Once the funeral is over and the cards and phone calls dwindle, you are left with a huge, gaping hole in your heart. You can't eat or sleep; you care about nothing. Years later, you begin to find enjoyment in life, but everything is tainted with a continued sense of loss. My friends are all becoming grandparents, now. Jim and I will never experience that joy. We'll never see the joy that Dan would have experienced

when he became a father. We don't want to kill ourselves. We've moved beyond that temptation. However, we are more than happy to leave this earth when the day arrives so we can be with Dan, again.

When I spoke at Dan's funeral, I exhorted his friends and family not to think of what happened to Dan when they think of him. Instead, I encouraged them to think of their happy memories of time spent with Dan. Dan was very funny and loved to make people laugh. I miss that. I miss him every second of every day. His friends are now my "kids", and they miss him terribly. It has been difficult for them.

So what is it like to be a close friend of a murder victim? Let me read you the words of just one of Dan's many friends. Her name is Maria:

"I never knew what fear was until I learned of my friend's gruesome murder. I had to seek professional psychological help to try to get passed what was done to him. I was also put on anxiety medication. Every time I see a fire, tarp, saw, even Drain-O, my mind wanders back to November 8, 2007, the day I learned that my friend, who mysteriously didn't show up at my house the night before like he said he would had been stabbed, decapitated, burned and left in a field and river. I learned all this after sending messages all day then casually looking at the local news website. My heart was broken, and my mind was trying to understand how someone could actually be capable of doing this.

"Today, nearly six years later a part of my heart is missing; it always will be. I think about Dan every single day. I am still trying to get passed how he died. I fear I never will. To know that another human being could be capable of doing something this horrifying scares me. I couldn't sleep knowing the monster that created this plan would have the chance to walk free again. I am afraid that people who have not experienced something so horrible would think that it's actually acceptable to give someone like Orlewicz a second chance out in society. Many times, my fond memories of my friend are replaced with the photos of his body and the knowledge of what happened to him. That is what hurts most of all. now."

If you would like to see more comments by Dan's friends and family, go to Memories of Dan Sorensen on Facebook.

I have had many opportunities over the past six years to speak with people about the danger of releasing cold blooded killers out into society. I am privileged to be acquainted with many young people who work hard and help others who are in need. They face tough choices in their lives, but make sacrifices in order to do the right things. One young man that I know and admire had to endure ridicule, great pressure from peers and coaches, and the loss of monetary gain when he made the decision to serve a full-time mission for our church instead of continuing on with his soccer career. I am tired of hearing about the undeveloped minds of teens being used as an excuse to excuse heinous behavior. If we use this as a standard for judgment, then teens should not be allowed to drive a car, babysit, or even be allowed to leave their homes without adult supervision. I have spoken with many teens who are complete strangers to me. For the most part, they are offended by this idea that their brains are so undeveloped that they can't discern between right and wrong. In my line of work, I come across dozens of teens on a daily basis. Sometimes I will ask them, "If someone you know from school were convicted of

planning out a murder and then actually killing their victim, what do you think should happen to them?" Once in a while they'll say, "I don't know." Most often they believe the offender should receive the death penalty, at times in the same manner in which they killed their victim, or spend the rest of their life in prison. Only once did I ever get this response: "I don't see anything wrong with what the kid did. What's the big deal?" Does that scare you? It scared me!

The point is made by those in favor of less-stringent sentences for juveniles that recidivism is not likely to occur. I ask, how do we know who will and who will not kill, again? Certainly those who have planned out the killing of their victim(s) and carried them out are more likely to kill, again. One of our nation's most notorious serial killers, Theodore Bundy, tried to overcome his need to kill. He was successful for a brief period of time, but couldn't sustain his diabolical need to destroy life. He was an adult when caught and executed. However, his acts of murder began at the age of 14. He confessed to this. (See "The Stranger Beside Me" by Ann Rule.) Even if these juveniles wouldn't kill, again, they need to pay the price for taking an innocent life or lives. My son had just turned 26 years old when his life was taken by a young man who is clearly a sociopath with psychotic tendencies. My son had hopes and dreams, people he loved in his life, and yes, even faults as we all do that he would have liked to overcome. He was robbed of all of that when he was terrorized and murdered. Like Dan's friend, Maria, there is a huge part of my heart that has died. It frightens me to make close relationships for fear that they will go away. Where is Dan's second chance? How many more lives will be twisted, dreams crushed, hearts broken, people terrorized and killed should those who CHOSE to destroy the lives of their victims as well as their own be allowed to walk our streets, again? Why must the surviving friends and family members of the REAL victims - the murdered - be forced to endure the recurring memories of their loved ones' demise when the perpetrators come before the parole board every two years? Five years is bad enough, but two? That would be like facing emotional chemotherapy and radiation. Life for the families would be filled with anguish and anxiety for the rest of their lives. Why is it that those who choose to kill are treated with kid gloves while those who don't deserve to suffer are ignored and abused? It's not a matter of what's fair and what's not. LIFE isn't fair. It's a matter of what's right and what's wrong.

To our equally passionate citizens on the opposite side of this issue, I do NOT want to hear that the victims are dead. There's nothing that can be done for them, but these poor, innocent kids have been thrown to the wolves. We need to help them. What happens if these teens and former teens are released into society? Will there be jobs awaiting them? Even fast food places will not hire convicted murderers. So they become a drain on society! They will eventually move on to other crimes if not murder. Do you want a Jean Pierre Orlewicz living next door to you? Anybody who would want that it not thinking clearly.

I had a conversation with a friend who is merciful and kind, yesterday. Even she made the point that our society would be full of fear if more and more murderers were released into society. What if you upset one of them in traffic? Or upset them in any way?

Would they come after you next? That fear would always be there.

I do not take the stand that I do out of a need for revenge or retribution. My husband and

I have forgiven Alex Letkemann. For Orlewicz I feel a deep sorrow. He had every opportunity to do great things with his life, but instead he chose to kill Dan. What a waste of two lives. Because he chose to waste his life, does that mean he should be saved from wasting it in prison? If you find a moldy piece of fruit in the back of your refrigerator, do you eat it? No, it goes in the trash where it belongs. I will admit that is a disrespectful analogy, but the point is that when someone is so bad that they are a threat to society, they should not walk among us. Despite my analogy, I do not think of Jean Pierre Orlewicz as a piece of trash. He is a child of God just as all of us are. But God gave us the power to choose how we would live our lives. Mr. Orlewicz made his choice and must meet the demands of justice in this world. What happens afterwards is up to his Creator.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to me. Please support the Senate bill. Though we would all like to see our loved ones' killer serve their original sentences, serving a minimum of 40 years before being eligible to appear before the parole board and then only being able to do so every five years is much better than what is being considered in the House bills. Thank you.